

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-05 AGRE-00 EB-07 COME-00 AID-05

TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /036 W

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R 202133Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2232

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 4348

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, EAGR, ES

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT DEFENDS AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION

REF: SAN SALVADOR 4265

1. PRESIDENT MOLINA USED THE OCCASION OF HIS ANNUAL ADDRESS TO THE NATIONAL ON CENTRAL AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY, SEPTEMBER 15, TO GIVE A SPEECH DEVOTED IN ITS ENTIRETY TO A VIGOROUS DEFENSE OF HIS AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM, THE TARGET OF HEAVY ATTACK FROM MANY SIDES (SEE REFTEL FOR MAGNITUDE AND SERIOUSNESS OF THAT ATTACK).

2. FIRST, THE PRESENT GAVE A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF: (A) THE NEED FOR REFORM OF THE AGRARIAN SECTOR ("THE POPULATION EXPLOSION CONTINUES TO WORSEN OUR LAND OWNERSHIP PROBLEM, PUTTING US ON THAT SAD LIST OF UNDERDEVELOPED NATIONS, WITH THE NATIONAL SHAME OF BEING ONE OF THE MOST UNDER-NUTRITIONED COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD.") AND; (B) THE HISTORY OF PREVIOUS GOES ATTEMPTS AT REFORM, HOW ALMOST EVERY GOVERNMENT SINCE THE MATANZA OF 1932 HAVE RECOGNIZED THE PLIGHT OF THE RURAL POOR AND THE NEED TO DO SOMETHING.

3. THE PRESIDENT DESCRIBED HIS OWN EFFORTS, HOW HE HAS
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REPEATEDLY AND FORCEFULLY COMMITTED HIS REGIME TO TRANSFORMING

THE AGRARIAN SECTOR IN EVERY MAJOR ADDRESS BEGINNING WITH HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS. HE SAID HIS STAFF HAS STUDIED THE EXAMPLES OF EVERY AGRARIAN REFORM PROGRAM ATTEMPTED IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE, THE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES, NOT IN AN EFFORT TO IMITATE THEM, BUT TO AVOID THEIR ERRORS.

4. THE PRESIDENT REAFFIRMED HIS AND HIS REGIME'S BELIEF IN THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM. THE ISTA PROJECT IS PROOF OF THIS COMMITMENT, HE SAID, SINCE THE IDEA IS TO CREATE LARGE NUMBER OF NEW LAND OWNERS, EACH WITH A STAKE IN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

5. MOLINA FORCEFULLY COMMITTED HIMSELF TO IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST PROJECT BY STATING THAT "NOW THAT I HAVE LAUNCHED THIS PROGRAM, I DO NOT INTEND TO SPEND MY LAST YEAR IN OFFICE INAUGURATING PUBLIC WORKS, LEAVING IMPLEMENTATION

TO MY SUCCESSOR THAT WOULD BE A CRUEL HOAX, THE GREATEST DEMAGOGUERY, THE BIGGEST LIE".

6. REFERRING TO HIS OPPONENTS DEMAND FOR "DIALOGUE", THE PRESIDENT SAID HE AGREED. HE INSISTED THAT TRUE DIALOGUE REQUIRES A CALM, CONSTRUCTIVE CLIMATE IN WHICH TO THRIVE. HE CONCLUDED THAT WHEN HIS OPPONENTS CEASE THEIR U RIDENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST HIM AND ISTA, THEY WILL BE INVITED TO TALK WITH THEIR PRESIDENT TO PRESENT ANY SUGGESTIONS THEY MIGHT HAVE FOR ISTA. REFERRING AGAIN TO THE PRESS CAMPAIGN, HE SAID THAT WHILE THESE OPPONENTS ARE CALLING HIS REGIME "TOTALITARIAN", THEY ARE OPENING BANK ACCOUNTS IN SWITZERLAND, AND LOOKING FOR INVESTMENTS IN MIAMI, ALL WITHOUT GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE.

7. MOLINA ENDED BY REPEATING HIS PROMISE TO MOVE AHEAD, TO TAKE NO STEP BACKWARD, TO DEVOTE ALL HIS ENERGIES TILL HIS LAST DAY IN OFFICE TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AGRARIAN SECTOR.

8. COMMENT - THE SPEECH WAS UNDOUBTEDLY ONE OF THE PRESIDENT'S BEST. AN EMBASSY SOURCE DESCRIBED THE PLANNING THAT WENT INTO IT AND THE CAREFUL ATTENTION THAT WAS PAID TO PROJECTING THE BASIC MESSAGE - I'M WILLING TO RECEIVE SUGGESTIONS FROM MY OPPONENTS, BUT ONLY AFTER THEY CUT OUT THE PUBLIC ATTACKS, AND ONLY IF THEY UNDERSTAND THAT I WILL NOT RETREAT FROM THE BASIC ISTA CONCEPT. SEVERAL OPPONENTS OF ISTA HAVE COMMENTED TO EMBASSY OFFICIALS OF HAVING BEEN IMPRESSED WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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THE PRESIDENT'S SINCERITY AND LOGIC.
LUBENSKY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LAND REFORMS, AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: powellba
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SANSAS04348
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760355-1167
From: SAN SALVADOR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760941/aaaabitw.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SAN SALVADOR 4265
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: powellba
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUL 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2004 by powellba>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT DEFENDS AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, EAGR, ES, (MOLINA BARRAZA, ARTURO ARMANDO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006